

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 10982 01 OF 02 171910Z
ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-14 EA-12 EUR-12 NEA-10
OIC-02 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 FDRE-00 HEW-06
INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 HA-05 CA-01 SCS-06 ICA-20
EB-08 AGRE-00 ABF-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /140 W
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R 171737Z JUL 78
FM USMISSION GENEVA
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 10982

E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: ECOSOC

SUBJECT: 1978 SUMMER ECOSOC - AGENDA ITEM 29: THIRD
COMMITTEE-DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATION

1. SUMMARY: DISCUSSIONS ON UNDRO TOOK PLACE AFTERNOON OF
JULY 11, 12, AND 13. MEETING WAS, IN GENERAL, UNEVENTFUL;
THERE WERE NO SURPRISES. DELEGATIONS ARE STILL SPLIT ON
ISSUES OF CORE FINANCING AND RANGE OF UNDRO RESPONSIBILI -
TIES. IN ADDITION TO OPENING STATEMENT BY BERKOL,
REMARKS WERE MADE BY LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES,
UNEP, ROMANIA, CHINA, USSR, JAPAN, NETHERLANDS, NIGERIA,
NEW ZEALAND, GERMANY, UK, SPAIN, FRANCE, TANZANIA,
SWEDEN (ON BEHALF ALSO OF DENMARK, FINLAND,
ICELAND AND NORWAY), U.S., POLAND IRAN, UNDP, HCR, FAO,
UGANDA AND ARGENTINA. END SUMMARY.

2. BERKOL'S REMARKS WERE A SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT A/33/82
WHILE LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES GAVE BRIEF RUNDOWN
OF ITS ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES DURING RECENT
DISASTERS. UNEP EXPLAINED ROLE IT PLAYED IN NATURAL
DISASTER PREVENTION.

3. EACH DELEGATE THANKED SYG FOR ITS INFORMATIVE REPORT
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PAGE 02 GENEVA 10982 01 OF 02 171910Z

AND PRAISED THE UNDRO COORDINATOR FOR HIS EFFORTS IN
EXPEDITING DISASTER RELIEF AND IN IMPROVING
COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE UN SYSTEM.

4. FUNDING OF CORE: SOME COUNTRIES SUCH AS SWEDEN,
NETHERLANDS, NEW ZEALAND, GERMANY, UK AND US
AGREED TO CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF TRANSFERRING CORE

ADMIN COSTS FROM TRUST FUND TO REGULAR BUDGET ON PREMISE THAT UNDRO IS A CENTRAL FUNCTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS. FRANCE, POLAND, ARGENTINA AND USSR OPPOSED ANY SUCH TRANSFERS PREFERRING TO KEEP CONTRIBUTIONS ON VOLUNTARY BASIS AS PERMANENT MODE OF FINANCING.

5. RE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION: MOST DELEGATES MADE STRONG PITCH FOR NEED TO CONCENTRATE EFFORTS ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION WHILE ADMITTING PROBLEM IS COMPLEX WITH NO SINGLE SOLUTION. CHINA STATED THAT IMPORTANT TASK IS TO "RESTORE NORMAL LIFE TO VICTIMS OF DISASTER." NEW ZEALAND STATED THAT THE UNDRO COORDINATOR NEEDED GUIDANCE, WITHIN THE SCOPE OF HIS OFFICE, IN ORDER TO UNDERTAKE A DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION PROGRAM. UK PROPOSED THAT FUNDS SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PREVENTION PROGRAMS AND STATED THAT BRITISH EXPERTS COULD BE PROVIDED TO ASSIST DISASTER-PRONE COUNTRIES. FRANCE STATED THAT UNDRO SHOULD STICK TO CONCENTRATING ON ITS ORIGINAL MANDATE OF ADDRESSING NATURAL DISASTERS; ARGENTINA BELIEVES UNDRO SHOULD ADDRESS ONLY EMERGENCY NEEDS.

6. ROLE OF UNDP: MANY COUNTRIES SUCH AS FRANCE, GERMANY, UK, NETHERLANDS, IRAN STATED THAT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF UNDRO SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN AS PART OF UNDP; FRANCE AND ARGENTINA SUGGESTED IT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN IPF.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 GENEVA 10982 01 OF 02 171910Z

7. REQUESTS FOR REPORTS: SEVERAL COUNTRIES REQUESTED ADDITIONAL REPORTING AND/OR INFORMATION FROM UNDRO COORDINATOR. BOTH FRANCE AND UK INDICATED THAT THE COMMITTEE SHOULD HAVE HAD BEFORE IT THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR MORE COHERENT DELIBERATIONS AND SUGGESTED THIS BE DONE IN FUTURE. BOTH UK AND NETHERLANDS WOULD LIKE TO SEE A REPORT REFLECTING THE RESULTS OF THE COORDINATOR'S QUESTIONNAIRE ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REMOVING OBSTACLES TO THE FLOW OF ASSISTANCE TO DISASTER VICTIMS. NEW ZEALAND ASKED FOR AN ACCOUNT OF SPECIFIC PROJECTS UNDRO IS UNDERTAKING. NETHERLANDS ASKED FOR A REPORT ON THE EMERGENCY SHELTER STUDY. SWEDEN, UK AND NETHERLANDS STATED THAT WE NEEDED TO HEAR FROM THE DISASTER-PRONE COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY THE LEAST DEVELOPED AND/OR MSA COUNTRIES, AS TO HOW THEY PERCEIVED THEIR PRIORITY NEEDS IN TERMS OF PLANNING FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION.

8. US STATEMENT - BECAUSE NO POSITION PAPER WAS RECEIVED, US DELEGATE MADE SHORT STATEMENT DRAWING FROM GENEVA 10154 AND BRIEF CONSULTATIONS WITH IO/DHP. STATEMENT

FOLLOWS.

BEGIN TEXT: THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION WISHES TO THANK THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HIS REPORT A/33/82 WHICH WE FIND TO BE A COMPLETE AND INFORMATIVE ACCOUNT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR DURING THE ANNUAL PERIOD 1 APRIL 1977 THROUGH 31 MARCH 1978. WE COMMEND THE COORDINATOR FOR HIS EFFORTS TO EXPEDITE INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE AND TO IMPROVE COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM WITH REGARD TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 10982 02 OF 02 171915Z
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UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 GENEVA 10982

PREVENTION.

AT THIS POINT, I SHOULD LIKE TO MAKE ONLY A BRIEF COMMENT. WITH REGARD TO THE FINANCING OF THE CORE PROGRAMME -- WHILE THE UNITED STATES HAS ITSELF CONTRIBUTED \$1.5 MILLION THROUGH 1978 AND CONTINUES TO URGE OTHER DONORS TO MAKE VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUPPORT THIS TRUST ACCOUNT, NONTHELESS RECOGNIZE THE DESIRE OF UNDRO AND OTHER DONOR NATIONS TO CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF TRANSFERING EXPENSES FOR THE CORE PROGRAM FROM THE TRUST ACCOUNT TO THE REGULAR BUDGET. THEREFORE, AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME, WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO SUPPORT THE TRANSFER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED COSTS OF SOME ADDITIONAL POSITIONS.

WE ARE ALSO A FIRM BELIEVER IN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION WHERE WE HOPE TO SEE SOME NEW COMPREHENSIVE INITIATIVES LAUNCHED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THANK YOU.

END TEXT.

9. IN HIS WRAP.UP STATEMENT BERKOL INDICATED THAT HIS
OFFICE HAD BEGUN A SERIES OF VISITS TO DISASTER-
PRONE COUNTRIES IN ORDER TO ASSIST THEM TO ASSESS
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PAGE 02 GENEVA 10982 02 OF 02 171915Z

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION NEEDS;
THIS HE SAID HAD TO BE DONE ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS.
HE CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT LACK OF FUNDING IS AN
INHIBITING FACTOR.

10. SWEDEN DECIDED NOT TO TABLE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR
FULL TRANSFER CORE COSTS FROM TRUST ACCOUNT TO REGULAR
BUDGET. INSTEAD THEY INCLUDED LANGUAGE IN THEIR STATEMENT
WHICH SAID THAT THOUGH THIS IS THEIR PREFERENCE THEY WOULD
BE SATISFIED WITH AT LEAST PARTIAL TRANSFER FOR NOW. THEY
ALSO WERE COUNTING ON U.S. TO SUPPORT SOME ADDITIONAL
TRANSFER WHICH WE DID GIVE AND FOR WHICH WE RECEIVED
THANKS FROM UNDRO AND NUMBER OF DELEGATES. VANDEN HEUVEL

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